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SUBJECT: TEAM NIGERIA MEETS GON MINISTERS FOR WASHINGTON
TRIP FOLLOW UP; AMBASSADOR MEETS WITH YAR'ADUA

Classified By: Ambassador Robin R. Sanders for reasons 1.4. (b & d).

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: On February 12, 2008, the Ambassador and an interagency team briefed key GON ministers, officials, and top advisers to President Yar'Adua on the current U.S.-Nigerian bilateral relation as a follow up to Yar'Adua's December 12-14, 2007 Washington trip. The presentation was organized into the four main themes of our goals and objectives: Economic Growth and Trade; Investing in People (Education and Health); Peace and Security (including counterterrorism issues); and Governing Justly and Democratically (including election reform). The team also highlighted how USG goals and objectives in Nigeria complement Yar'Adua's Seven Point plan for his vision for the country. Subsequently, on Friday February 15 the Ambassador met with President Yar'Adua to brief him personally on USG efforts and encourage regular meetings between the two to follow-up and address key bilateral issues. Yar'Adua agreed. She also executed the Kosovo demarche at that time. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) The Ambassador, accompanied by the Economic Counselor, Agricultural Attache, Transnational Crime Affairs Officer (INL), Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC) Chief and the USAID Mission Director, met with the Ministers of Defense, Transportation, and Interior, and the Ministers of State for Energy (both Gas and Power), and Commerce & Industry, as well as Mustafa Aliyu, Director of External Affairs in the Office of the National Security Adviser, Amb. Hakeem Baba Ahmed, Permanent Secretary in the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), and Mrs.

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J.O. Ayo from the Office of the President's Chief of Staff. The session was chaired by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, as the Foreign Minister was out of the country. The Ambassador opened by providing an overview of key U.S. Presidential initiatives, namely the \$600 million African Education Initiative (AEI) and the President's Program for Aids Relief (PEPFAR), as well as U.S. technical assistance to

the Nigerian energy sector, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), National Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU), the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), and to the military under the auspices of the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA). She also briefed on the Gulf of Guinea Energy Security Strategy (GGESS), noting also that we could provide the same assistance bilaterally; and, the Trans Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), encouraging Nigeria to become more involved in this forum. The Ambassador proposed the establishment of regular meetings and dialogue in order to facilitate greater cooperation, to strengthen the bilateral partnership.

Economic Growth and Trade Issues

13. (SBU) The Ambassador began the briefing highlighting U.S. objectives. Acknowledging movement on the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) and Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT), she expressed USG interest in regular consultations on the TIFA and African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) work plans, and encouraged more movement on advancing the BIT. She also urged the lowering of tariffs, Nigeria's full adoption of the Economic Community of West African State's (ECOWAS) common external tariff plan, and the removal of import bans to facilitate trade and investment. Mission Agricultural Attache outlined his agency's trade and investment framework and partnerships between USG and GON in agricultural development, capacity building and trade. USAID Mission Director highlighted technical assistance on elections reform, in trade and economic growth, health, education and conflict resolution, particularly highlighting the extensive training and capacity building that AID has done in these areas, including in the

ABUJA 00000395 002 OF 004

Niger Delta.

Mass Transportation

14. (SBU) EconCouns outlined U.S. efforts to assist in the upgrade of Nigerian civil aviation, and stressed U.S. business and private sector interest in the rehabilitation and extension of the national rail network. The Minister of Transportation acknowledged the assistance in aviation and the interest in railroad development, and in engaging with American companies that could provide innovative design solutions for roads and other transportation infrastructure.

Power and Energy

15. (SBU) On this issue, EconCouns highlighted U.S. technical assistance already provided to the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) and mutual efforts to attract direct foreign investment to Nigeria's power sector. Following up on DAS Moss's point on this issue during his January 2008 visit, EconCouns said USG would be pleased to engage with GON policymakers in the formulation of sound and sustainable natural gas policies, including to ensure adequate fuel for power generation. In turn, the Minister for Energy (Gas) expressed her appreciation for the technical assistance to date on the West African Pipeline and proposed a future roundtable to explore other challenges related to natural gas development. The Ambassador agreed, noting that the meeting at hand was meant to be an overview of current areas of existing partnerships and U.S. activities underway, in an effort to ensure a better knowledge of U.S. programs.

Rule of Law and Transparency Issues

16. (SBU) Transnational Crime Affairs Officer (INL Program Officer) expanded upon the Ambassador's opening remarks by

detailing technical assistance to the EFCC, the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offenses Commission (ICPC) and the NDLEA, Nigeria's drug enforcement agency. He also described community-based bicycle policing projects, and the drug detection equipment currently being installed in Nigeria's international airports, which recently resulted in a large seizure of narcotics at Lagos airport. The Minister of Interior was particularly complimentary of USG efforts and expressed interest in expanding the Kaduna bicycle community policing program to other cities, as well as public/private partnerships to improve the Nigerian prison system. USAID Mission Director described programs to improve education and health; assist with electoral reform; support civil society on transparency issues; and strengthening the capacity of state and local governments to deliver services to citizens as well as address state fiscal reform.

Peace and Security =====

¶7. (SBU) The Ambassador and ODC Chief highlighted training and equipment provided to Nigerian peacekeepers in Sudan by ACOTA and our willingness to provide the same type of training/training for a Somalia deployment. She noted the upcoming exercise to test the sensors and communications equipment provided to the GON under GGESS and bilaterally, and also encouraged the GON to become more involved in the Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP). As part of the Mission's building block efforts to address the sensitivity on a new Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), the Ambassador highlighted that military-to-military cooperation was positive and that we would be seeking a similar framework document comparable to those we have in other areas. Continuing with this theme, ODC Chief cited the International

ABUJA 00000395 003 OF 004

Military Education and Training (IMET) program, the DOD/HIV program, bilateral training and exercises, and other assistance for counterterrorism efforts and border security. On the development side, USAID Mission Director enumerated programs related to civic education and activities targeted to at-risk youth to reduce violence in the Niger Delta.

Investing in People =====

¶8. (SBU) USAID Mission Director expanded upon Presidential initiatives mentioned earlier by the Ambassador, notably AEI and PEPFAR, and additionally discussed various programs related to malaria. The PermSec to the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) requested Peace Corps volunteers to help address some of Nigeria's education challenges. In response, the Ambassador noted that she had provided to the President sample letters for the GON to request Peace Corps programs in December 2007.

¶9. (SBU) The SGF PermSec expressed GON appreciation for the presentation, and stressed the need to keep in mind Yar'Adua's priorities of electoral reform, education, the Niger Delta, infrastructure security, and a means of evaluating USG/GON partnerships in order to make measurable progress in key areas. The Ambassador restated earlier comments by the USAID Mission Director about the USG effort and offers to the GON on election reform.

¶10. (SBU) The Minister of Defense (MOD) complimented the USG team on having comprehensively addressed the issues raised during Yar'Adua's visit to the U.S., and stressed the importance of the U.S.- Nigeria partnerships. In response, Ambassador reiterated her proposal for working group meetings with individual ministries every three to four months to insure progress on issues such as the BIT and security, for example. The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs who chaired the meeting added his thanks and appreciation for USG efforts and assistance. He and the MOD said this was the first time any diplomatic mission had made such a

comprehensive presentation to the Government.

Ambassador's Follow-Up with President Yar'Adua

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¶11. (SBU) Subsequently, on February 15 the Ambassador met with President Yar'Adua to brief him personally on USG bilateral assistance and encourage regular high level meetings between USG and GON officials to track progress on key issues of mutual concern. She stressed the importance of electoral reform, forward movement on trade and investment issues, increased cooperation on security matters, in addition to partnerships in the areas of energy, health and education.

¶12. (C) The Ambassador recognized the need for continued military-to-military cooperation, especially in the areas of maritime and coastal security under the auspices of the GGESS, but also noted bilateral assistance already underway in the form of sensors and radars for maritime coastal security. She restated capacity building assistance for peacekeepers headed to Somalia, akin to that provided to Nigerian troops for Sudan, and expressed her desire for greater Nigerian participation in the Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP). (Note: President Yar'Adua was not even aware of the TSCTP program.)

¶13. (SBU) The Ambassador encouraged forward movement on TIFA and the BIT to increase bilateral trade and investment, and Nigeria's complete (and not just partial) adoption of the ECOWAS common external tariff. She also briefed Yar'Adua on the USG's extensive PEPFAR program in Nigeria and on the AEI program.

ABUJA 00000395 004 OF 004

¶14. (SBU) Noting our desire for the EFCC to maintain its vigor, the Ambassador described technical assistance to date provided to the EFCC's affiliate, the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) in the form of a USG consultant, as well as the provision of advanced detection equipment at Nigeria's international airports, which led to the recent seizure of a large drug shipment in Lagos. Also highlighted were programs in the areas of transparency, police reform and capacity building, including the possibility under the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) to help expand the successful community-based bicycle policing initiative from Kaduna to other municipalities.

¶15. (C) COMMENT: Yar'Adua seemed genuinely surprised at the extent of USG program activity in Nigeria, as well as the extent to which USG assistance efforts coincided with the goals spelled out in his 7 Point Plan. END COMMENT.
SANDERS